

# EPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

## *Essex County, NJ*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

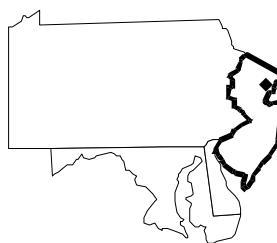
**EPA's** Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

### BACKGROUND

EPA has selected Essex County for a Brownfields Pilot. Essex County (population 750,273) is the second most densely populated county in the most densely populated state in the United States. Historically, the county developed as an industrial hub because of its advantageous location on Newark Bay and the Passaic River. Over the past several decades, social and commercial trends have led employers to migrate from the area, leaving behind underutilized and abandoned properties. This situation has led to poverty and crime throughout the county. There has also been a decrease in population in the past 20 years, with the county losing almost 100,000 residents since 1980. Currently, the population makeup is 12 percent Hispanic, 42 percent non-white, and 45 percent white, but in the target area, the population is 50 percent non-white and 8 percent Hispanic.

The Pilot targets five communities—Belleville, Bloomfield, East Orange, Irvington, and Orange. The target municipalities are all distressed communities that share similar problems, including significant employment decline, large minority and immigrant populations, high concentrations of poverty, and increased social service needs. The shift from

### PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Essex County, NJ*

**Date of Announcement:**  
May 2000

**Amount:** \$200,000

**Profile:** Essex County targets the five communities of Belleville, Bloomfield, East Orange, Irvington, and Orange for brownfields assessment and redevelopment planning.

#### Contacts:

Essex County  
(973) 395-8400

Regional Brownfields Team  
U.S. EPA - Region 2  
(212) 637-4314

Visit the EPA Region 2 Brownfields web site at:

<http://www.epa.gov/r02earth/superfnd/brownfld/bfmainpg.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:

<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

manufacturing to service employment, corporate downsizing, changing market demands, environmentally stringent regulations, efforts to contain costs, and corporate restructuring and mergers have left behind older, obsolete physical plants and underutilized and contaminated properties. Currently 150 brownfield sites have been identified in the county. Of these, one-third are located within the targeted area and are located in or adjacent to residential neighborhoods.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Essex County plans to use the Pilot funds to design and implement a model brownfields cleanup and redevelopment process, including identification, assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment planning for brownfields sites in the target area. Their goal is to stop the economic decay and resulting urban flight that currently plague the county. The Pilot, in partnership with the targeted communities, will enable the county to redevelop brownfields sites and economically revitalize the communities of Belleville, Bloomfield, East Orange, Irvington, and Orange.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Conducting a site inventory using existing planning information and then selecting and assessing sites in the Pilot area;
- Identifying barriers to redevelopment and identifying strategies to overcome these barriers;
- Enhancing ongoing cleanup planning efforts through site-specific information and consensus-based visions; and
- Creating a forum for expanded and interactive community involvement in the Pilot area.

*The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.*